

Workshop Session – May 20, 2025

The Graham County Board of Commissioners meet Tuesday, May 20, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. in the Graham County Community Building located at 196 Knight Street Robbinsville, NC for their monthly workshop session. Board present Meggan Smith, Lynn Cody, Natasha Williams and Connie Orr. Board absent Jacob Nelms. Also, present Manager Brady Cody, Finance Director Stacy Carpenter and Clerk Kim Crisp.

1. Chair Smith called the meeting to order.
2. Chair Smith asks for changes to the agenda. Manager Cody stated that Sara Coplai with WNC Bridge was unable to attend and asks that Chief Deputy Cody George be allowed to speak. Chair Smith asks for a motion for the stated change. Commissioner Williams made the motion. Commissioner Cody seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.
3. Chair Smith asks Chief George to speak. Chief George stated that the Sheriff's Department had agreed in February to revisit the School Resource Officers' positions and they with the school board decided to allow the officers to go under the Graham County Sheriff's Office and the school would reimburse the county for their pay and benefits. Chief George stated that Mr. Knight was retiring and the other SRO had taken a job elsewhere so two new officers were chosen. Chief George stated that the Sheriff's Department and the school will have a Memorandum of Understanding signed with the agreement details which include the reimbursement of the salaries and benefits. Chief George stated that the school is giving the department two vehicles, two firearms and two handguns to the office as well. Manager Cody asks that Attorney JK Coward review the memorandum of understanding prior to the finalization. Chief George stated that this does allow for two more employees to be assigned to the sheriff's office, but their salaries will be paid in full by the school. Chief George stated that the school requested a monthly repayment, and the Sheriff agreed to this request. Chief George stated that they are still working out the details and there would be no overtime hours, and, in the event, there is overtime it will be accrued as comp time only. Chief George stated that this agreement was in the best interest of the school, which would allow for a safer environment with the expanded available resources from the expanded sheriff jurisdiction and the school would no longer carry the liability. Chief George stated that they are the best move forward in their opinions. Smith asks if the office plans to recruit the two officers. Chief George stated that they already have two officers in place that are being sent to become certified with school resources. Chair Smith asks if these officers have experience. Chief George stated that one has over (14) years and the other has (6) years. Manager Cody stated that he has reviewed the agreement, and the pay does fall under the current pay plan. Chief George stated that the school had asked if the officers can receive the yearly raise that the school employees get each year but felt that this should not be done because it would cause inequity in the department along with hard feelings. Chair Smith stated that she agrees about the automatic increase each year. Commissioner Williams asks who will be responsible for the costs when the vehicles need to be replaced. Chief George stated that the current vehicles will last for five to six years and with the fleet in place he did not see any issues. Chair Smith asks if the MOU was ready for approval. Chief George stated that it is only in rough draft.
4. Robert Moody, School Superintendent stated that if the board has any questions to please let him know and that the school is excited to partner with the Sheriff's Office and does feel that the sheriff's office can provide a better and safer school. Mr. Moody stated that the school has lost over one-half million in funds thanks to zero timber receipts and they are trying all that they can to cut corners. Mr. Moody thanked the board for their support.
5. Chair Smith asks Manager Cody to speak. Manager Cody stated that the board had planned to hear from the county auditors but unfortunately, they were unable to make this meeting but will attend a continued meeting on June 3, 2025, if that is pleasing to the board. Manager Cody stated that the board can continue this meeting until Tuesday, June 3, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. for the FY 2022/2023 Audit Presentation by RH Accounting. The board agreed to this suggestion. Commissioner Orr stated that this is concerning to her because the county has been told numerous dates of completion. Commissioner Williams felt that they had mostly ghosted us. Manager Cody stated that Finance Director Carpenter has been very responsive to all requests and most replies have been made on the same day. Commissioner Orr stated

that we needed to do everything we could to move these audits forward as quickly as possible.

6. Chair Smith asks for a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Orr made the motion. Commissioner Williams seconded this motion. Vote unanimous.

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Meggan Smith, Chair, Graham County Commissioner

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Lynn Cody, Vice-Chairman, Graham County Commissioner

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Jacob Nelms, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Connie Orr, Member, Graham County Commissioner

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Natasha Williams, Member, Graham County Commissioner

ATTEST:

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Kim Crisp, Clerk to the Board